

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and

lower quality
service.

Since passage of the
Telecommunications
Act of 1996 and the
“deregulation” of
cable, consumers
have seen their
rates jump an
average of 59
percent — with some
areas experiencing
even more dramatic
increases.

We are required to
buy channels we
don't want or need
because the cable
operators bundle
them together. The
quality of customer
service often
reflects the fact
that cable
television is not a
competitive market.

We only want to
watch a small number
of the hundreds of
channels that we are
forced to accept by
our satellite
company, DirectTV.
We would like to get
other channels (some
local, some feeds
from different

countries or regions) which are not available in our area.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

The cost of Satellite Modem service is about twice what DSL costs. The Cable modem costs from our local cable monopoly is also very expensive, and not worth the cost of only a marginal increase in service speed over dial-up service.

Our DSL service, Earthlink, charges SEPARATELY for DSL

AND for internet access. (Now why would I even need DSL service if I didn't want Internet access?) It seems to me that I am being charged TWICE for the same service!

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers.

Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce

the programming that
citizens want and
need.

DirectTV does not
offer any community
access channels with
it's overpriced
service.

The last thing we
need is to reward
the anti-competitive
actions of cable
giants by permitting
greater
consolidation in
ownership, reducing
competition, and
encouraging more of
the same.

It's past time that
the FCC returns to
being the champion
of the Public
Interest, instead of
serving as the
lap-dog of the
corporate
communications
conglomerates! The
air-waves, including
wireless networking
services, are public
domain, and belong
to everybody, not
just the few
corporations with

the financial
resources to buy off
the FCC and
Congress. Don't
think the public is
unaware of the
corruption shown by
the sweetheart deals
made between
corporations and the
Congress. There will
be a day
reckononing, when
the voters join to
throw the bums out!